

S&D Interparliamentary Newsletter - Connecting with National Parliaments

BRUSSELS, 08/02/24

S&D NATIONAL INTERPARLIAMENTARY NETWORK

Dear Arielle,

On 26 January 2024, the S&D Group in the European Parliament held its fourth S&D national inter-parliamentary network meeting. The meeting provided a forum of exchange for our network as well as a platform to our friends from Ukraine. **Currently, our network is composed of approximately 69 senior staff in 32 parliamentary chambers across 27 Member States.** To date, the network consists of former ministers, MEPs and MPS, secretary generals, heads of cabinet, cabinet members and senior EU advisors.



The aim of this network is to strengthen the ties of our political family in Europe and beyond. This is the reason why the S&D Group is very happy to count in its network of friends two candidate countries and one from EEA (European Economic Area).

From one progressive presidency to another - Spain passes the baton to Belgium



The Spanish Presidency took place in the second half of 2023. Together with **State Secretary for the EU, [Fernando Sampedro](#)**, **PSOE Senator and Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, [Pere Joan Pons](#)** and S&D coordinator for Constitutional Affairs, [Domènec Ruiz Devesa](#), we reflected on the intense six-month period of the [Spanish Presidency](#) and the formation of a new progressive government. Indeed, the outgoing presidency closed very important legislative and political files. During this period, more than 190 trilogues have been held with the European Parliament, and more than 40 legislative dossiers have been adopted.

Fernando Sampedro highlighted the big successes of the presidency, and in particular the agreement reached on: the [reform of the electricity market](#), [the Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), the extension of the Schengen Area to Romania and Bulgaria, the review of the economic governance framework, the Law on the Restoration of Nature, the Law on Critical Raw Materials and [the Law on Artificial Intelligence](#). Last but not least, the "historic" agreement reached by EU leaders on [15 December at the European Council](#) to begin accession negotiations with Ukraine and Moldova.

Pere Joan Pons took a step back and a look ahead at this crucial year and called upon all Progressives across Europe to be very engaged and ready for the upcoming electoral process. Indeed, Europe is in a wave of polarisation in many nations and in the European Parliament. For Pere Joan, this year is the **year of democracy for Europe**. Thanks to the S&D family and the Spanish Presidency, a clear European perspective was given to Ukraine and Moldova at the European Summit last December, but he reminded colleagues that enlargement shall not be disassociated from the key debate of deepening the EU.

Since 1 January 2024, Belgium took over the [presidency of the Council of the European Union](#). Julie-May Bricmont, head of the private office of Eliane Tillieux (PS), President of the [House of Representatives](#), gave an insight to the Presidency and its [parliamentary dimension](#) in particular. The [Belgian presidency](#) is focusing on defending rule of law, democracy, and unity, strengthening our competitiveness, pursuing a green



and just transition, reinforcing our social and health agenda, protecting people and borders and promoting a global Europe. Inter-parliamentary cooperation is at the heart of the Presidency and in particular of the President of the Chamber. Indeed, the **Federal Parliament of Belgium is organising five conferences under the umbrella of European inter-parliamentary cooperation:** 2 COSAC meetings (chairperson and plenary), 2 IPCs (one on Stability, Economic Coordination and Governance in the EU and



one on CFSP/CSDP) and the joint parliamentary scrutiny group on Europol. In addition to the fixed conferences, three others will be organised by the regional parliaments, which are part of the Belgian

Parliamentary system, on circular economy, on urban policy and artificial intelligence. The conferences will take place at different locations in Belgium: Brussels, Namur, Ghent and Bruges.

S&Ds stand with Ukraine: Progressives stand with the SD platform

The S&D inter-parliamentary network meeting was also an opportunity to reach out to our Ukrainian friends and learn more about the [SD platform](#).



In times when security for the entire European continent is threatened by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, it seems even more indispensable that S&Ds across Europe consolidate their influence and strength to defend peace and security, democracy, prosperity and common values.

S&Ds stand alongside Ukraine at a time when it bravely defends its people, territory, and European freedom. Our political family supports Ukraine's future as an EU member. Therefore, the S&D Group has been actively working on relations with progressive partners in Ukraine, particularly with the SD Platform- a broad community of active civil society members spreading social-democratic ideas through informal education. It is also a platform that unites like-minded individuals to address the social agenda in a wartime country. The S&D Group has been hosting several trainees from SD Platform since May 2022 and will continue to do so in the future, as an investment into Ukraine's new generation of progressive leaders. Iratxe García Pérez, President of the S&D Group, also met with representatives of the SD Platform during her [visit to Kyiv in March 2023](#) to strengthen its collaboration. In addition, a donation campaign has been conducted to support SD Platform activists.

Some of the activists have settled as refugees in Germany, Belgium and Poland, continuing their activities as a local branch for the sake of Ukraine's social-democratic future. Likewise, these young Ukrainians actively maintain connections with members of the social democratic family through participation in youth and political party events.

The S&D Group believes that effective support to Ukraine must be based on a comprehensive understanding of Ukraine's domestic challenges. Therefore, it is crucial for the social-democratic family to have reliable progressive partners in post-war Ukraine.

Some S&D Members of the European Parliament and staff have already participated in the European Politician course for Ukrainian youth organised by SD Platform.

There is a European future for Ukraine and for Ukrainian Progressives, and the S&D group stands with both Ukraine and SD Platform!

S&Ds join forces to combat the far-right at national and European level

At the inter-parliamentary network meeting, keynote speakers from Spain, Poland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands exchanged on their latest national elections and their possible impact on the upcoming European elections. **At a time when Europe swings towards the extreme right – either because**



the extreme right gains access to member states' governments or because the right wing relies on them to govern – the fear that the result of the European elections would consolidate this trend and inevitably reshape Europe was evident.

Apart from Spain and Poland, where respectively PSOE successfully won against VOX and formed a new progressive government last November and where a progressive coalition took back power, socialists and social democrats lost recent national elections. After the Dutch populist leader Geert Wilders' shock election victory in November, the threat of a larger far-right

influence in the upcoming European Parliament becomes a shared fear across Europe. In fact, latest poll for the next European elections has indeed predicted significant gains for the far-right and the prospect of an unprecedented right-wing coalition in the upcoming European legislative period.

All speakers concluded, with the same message, the rise of the far right at national and European level is undeniable and a **closer cooperation between national and European Progressives is indispensable to avoid the worst** at upcoming national and European elections.

LATEST NEWS

- [Tomorrow can be a historic day for over 30 million platform workers, urge S&Ds](#), 07.02.2024
- [First ever resolution on the rule of law in Greece adopted! EPP must finally stop covering for Mitsotakis!](#), 07.02.2024
- [Iratxe García: "We need less polarisation and populism, and more dialogue to ensure fair income for farmers"](#), 07.02.2024
- [S&Ds urge an ambitious EU law to ensure fair pay and full rights for all trainees](#), 06.02.2024
- [Deal on the EU directive to fight violence against women: just a first step for the S&Ds!](#), 06.02.2024
- [S&Ds secure new rules for a paradigm shift from a throw-away economy to the right to repair](#), 02.02.2024
- [EU consumers will be empowered to make healthier breakfast choices, thanks to S&Ds](#), 31.01.2024
- [Iratxe García to EUCO: "No more delays to adopt the budget that Europe needs to fulfil its duties"](#), 31.01.2024
- [EPP, S&D, Renew Europe, Greens/EFA and ECR Leaders call on EUCO to deliver on Ukraine](#), 31.01.2024

WHAT'S NEXT

- 12-13 February – **European Parliamentary Week 2024**, Brussels
- 14 February , **Annual visit of the Norwegian Parliament**, Special programme for the Labour Party Members, European Parliament, Brussels
- 3 – 5 March, **Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence (IPC CFSP/CSDP)**, Bruges , Belgium
- 7 March, **Interparliamentary Committee Meeting on the International Women's Day**, European Parliament, Brussels
- 24 – 26 March, **LXXI COSAC Plenary Meeting**, European Parliament, Brussels

Our Team



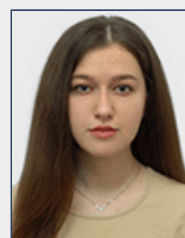
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The Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (the S&D Group) is the second largest political group in the European Parliament. We stand for an inclusive European society based on principles of solidarity, equality, diversity, freedom and fairness. We promote social justice, jobs and growth, consumer rights, sustainable development, financial market reforms and human rights to create a stronger and more democratic Europe and a better future for all citizens.

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Group of the Progressive Alliance of
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